

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

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1. A method of operating a plurality of consumer electronic devices
5 interconnected to form a network, said method comprising the steps of:
 - a) configuring a resource manager of said network with an access
policy during network initialization;
 - b) receiving a service request indicating an identity of a user;
 - c) based on said identity, said resource manager determining
10 whether said service request violates said access policy;
 - d) provided said service request is permissible, said resource
manager determining whether resources of said network necessary for carrying
out said service request are available; and
 - e) provided said resources necessary for carrying out said service
15 request are available, said resource manager transmitting control signals to
said network causing said plurality of consumer electronic devices to carry out
said service request.
2. A method as recited in Claim 1 further comprising the step of
20 returning a failure message to said user when said service request violates said
access policy.
3. A method as recited in Claim 1 further comprising the step of
maintaining a record of activities of said user.

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4. A method as recited in Claim 3 wherein said step (c) comprises the step of retrieving said record of activities of said user from a log database provided said access policy is dependent on user activities.

5. A method as described in Claim 1 further comprising the steps of: communicating user identification information of said user to said server; authenticating said user identification information; and provided said user identification information is unauthenticated, denying said user access to resources of said network.

6. A method as described in Claim 5 wherein said resources comprise hard resources and soft resources, and wherein said hard resources comprise said plurality of consumer electronic devices and wherein said soft resources comprise content information accessible by said plurality of consumer electronic devices.

7. A method as recited in Claim 6 wherein said step (d) comprises the step of accessing a resource pool, wherein said resource pool contains information regarding availability of said hard resources.

8. A method as recited in Claim 1 wherein said access policy is stored in a policy database accessible by said resource manager.

9. A computer-usable medium having computer-readable program code embodied therein for causing a computer system to perform a method of managing resources within a network including a plurality of consumer electronic devices, said method comprising the steps of:

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- a) configuring a resource manager of said network with an access policy during network initialization;
 - b) receiving a service request indicating an identity of a user;
 - c) based on said identity, said resource manager determining whether said service request violates said access policy;
 - d) provided said service request is permissible, said resource manager determining whether resources of said network necessary for carrying out said service request are available; and
 - e) provided said resources necessary for carrying out said service request are available, said resource manager transmitting control signals to said network to cause said plurality of consumer electronic devices to carry out said service request.

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10. A computer-usable medium as recited in Claim 9 wherein said method further comprises the step of returning a failure message if said service request violates said access policy.

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11. A computer-usable medium as recited in Claim 9 wherein said method further comprises the step of maintaining a record of activities of said user.

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12. A computer-usable medium as recited in Claim 11 wherein said step (c) comprises the step of retrieving said record of activities of said user from a log database provided said access policy is dependent on user activities.

13. A computer-usable medium as recited in Claim 12 wherein said method further comprises the steps of:

communicating user identification information of said user to said server;
authenticating said user identification information; and
provided said user identification information is unauthenticated, denying
said user access to resources of said network.

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14. A computer-usable medium as recited in Claim 13 wherein said
resources comprise hard resources and soft resources, and wherein said hard
resources comprise said plurality of consumer electronic devices and wherein
said soft resources comprise content information accessible by said plurality of
10 consumer electronic devices.

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15. A computer-usable medium as recited in Claim 14 wherein said
step (d) further comprising a step of accessing a resource pool that stores
availability information of said hard resources.

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16. A computer-usable medium as recited in Claim 11 wherein said
access policy is stored in a policy database accessible by said resource
manager.

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17. A home server coupled to control a network of consumer
electronic devices, said home server comprising:

- a) means for storing an access policy;
- b) means for receiving a service request indicating an identity of a
user;
- 25 c) means for determining whether said service request violates said
access policy based on said identity;

d) means for determining whether resources of said network necessary for carrying out said service request are available; and

e) provided said service request is permissible and provided said resources necessary for carrying out said service request are available, means for causing respective ones of said consumer electronic devices to carry out said service request.

18. A home server as recited in Claim 17 further comprising means for returning a failure message when said service request violates said access policy.

19. A home server as recited in Claim 17 further comprising database means for maintaining a record of activities of said user.

20. A home server as recited in Claim 19 further comprising means for retrieving said record of activities of said user from said database means provided said access policy is dependent on user activities.

21. A home server as recited in Claim 17 further comprising:
means for communicating user identification information of said user to said server;
means for authenticating said user identification information; and
means for denying said user access to resources of said network provided said user identification information is unauthenticated.

22. A home server as recited in Claim 21 wherein said resources comprise hard resources and soft resources, wherein said hard resources

comprise said plurality of consumer electronic devices and wherein said soft resources comprise content information accessible by said plurality of consumer electronic devices.

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23. A home server as recited in Claim 22 wherein said means (d) comprises means for accessing a resource pool that stores availability information of said hard resources.

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